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Thursday, March 07, 2013 3:02 PM

Rep. Walker, Toni

**Cc:** Rep. Urban, Diana; Rep. Abercrombie, Catherine; AppropriationTestimony

**Subject:** Letter of support for the Healthy Start Program

To Whom It May Concern;

My name is Dale Caruso and I presently work for a Social Service Agency in Torrington, CT called Family Strides. Family Strides works with families in offering programs that give them a chance to manage in these difficult times.

The Healthy Start Program offers assistance to families in helping them to fill out their applications and see if they qualify for any insurance.

It's a difficult and sometimes an over whelming process and the parents appreciate the support and kindness that they receive at our office.

We like to call ourselves a one stop shopping experience for the community. While at appointment for Healthy Start they may also qualify for many other services that we offer. We also house the WIC Program, the Fatherhood Program and the Nurturing Families Network Home Visiting

Program. The families leave with a sense of accomplishment and sense of empowerment that they can manage and make it through these tough economical times with one less thing to have to worry about, insurance.

I have been fortunate to have worked for Family Strides for the past fourteen years and have witnessed how programs like Healthy Start have helped our families. It just works. I truthfully don't know how families would manage if the Healthy Start Program is no longer funded and not available to them.

Thank You,

Dale Caruso  
Parent & Child Development Worker